United Nations CRPD/C/SR.305

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Distr.: General
3 April 2017

Original: English

**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
**Seventeenth session**

**Summary record of the 305th meeting**
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 24 March 2017, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Ms. Degener

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Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35 *(continued)*

*Initial report of Cyprus (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by parties to the Convention under article 35** *(continued)*

*Initial report of Cyprus (continued)* (CRPD/C/CYP/1; CRPD/C/CYP/Q/1 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Cyprus took places at the Committee table.*

*Articles 1–20*

2. **Ms. Floerentzou-Kakouri** (Cyprus), replying to questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting, said that paragraph 42 of the replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/CYP/Q/1/Add.1) summarized the plans in place to safeguard persons with disabilities during natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. Consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities on a new law on legal capacity and supported decision-making were ongoing. Regrettably, there were currently no organizations for persons with intellectual disabilities in Cyprus; instead, such persons were represented by parents' associations working with organizations of persons with disabilities. Information regarding supported decision-making was not yet available in easy-to-read, accessible formats, but the Government recognized that that was an oversight that required correction.

3. The vast majority of persons with disabilities lived independently or with family members. In addition to the 74 persons currently living in the country's psychiatric hospital, around 550 persons with psychosocial disabilities were housed in small community-based group homes run either by the State or by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). No data were available regarding the numbers of persons with disabilities living in homes for older persons, but overall, and taking all possible arrangements into account, less than 1 per cent of the population was living in institution-style accommodation. The Government had recognized that there was a shortage of community-based care centres for persons with disabilities requiring round-the-clock care and taken legislative measures to rectify the situation. In addition, a new pilot project, supported by the European Social Fund, had been launched to provide funding for organizations of persons with disabilities to pay for specialized nurses and carers, with the aim of ensuring that persons with disabilities requiring 24-hour care could receive those services through their representative organizations.

4. The Government's vision for community-based group homes was that they should have a family atmosphere and provide a diverse range of support services as well as recreational and creative activities, and opportunities for supported employment and participation in community life. If a group home did not meet those objectives, then it could conceivably be described as a small institution. Such group homes were a necessity, however, not only because some persons with disabilities required 24-hour care but also because some persons either had no family or their family members were unable to look after them.

5. Social benefits, some of which were means-tested, were available for persons with disabilities to pay for any professional care services they needed. Monitoring mechanisms were currently in place for means-tested benefits only, so as to ensure that the money provided was being used for its intended purpose. While the Government recognized the need for monitoring, it was in favour of shifting the focus to the provision of more services and away from cash allowances. Organizations of persons with disabilities were broadly in agreement with that approach.

6. Various measures were in place to enable persons with disabilities to purchase assistive devices and technologies. By way of example, the Government provided subsidies for up to 80 per cent of the cost of buying certain equipment, such as wheelchairs, communication software and assistive devices. Some equipment also attracted a lower rate of value-added tax, including assistive devices imported from abroad. In a similar vein, both special education and mainstream schools were required to supply, at no cost to their families, any assistive technologies and devices needed by pupils with disabilities. Training in the use of those devices was also provided. As well as providing assistive technology



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training, the School for the Blind also had a range of devices available for blind persons to use on a trial basis so as to help them select the most appropriate one for their needs.

7. Regarding article 20 of the Convention, besides providing mobility allowances and funding for social assistants to accompany persons with disabilities to social and cultural events, Cyprus was also one of eight European Union member States to sign up to the European Union disability card pilot project. The card, which was expected to be issued in the spring of 2017, was intended to enable persons with disabilities to travel to other European Union countries and enjoy equal access to sites of cultural interest. In consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, cardholders visiting Cyprus would be entitled to a 50-per cent reduction on public transport, free access to archaeological sites, discounted theatre tickets and beach equipment and other benefits. Lastly, deaf and hard-of-hearing persons were entitled to have driving licences.

8. **Mr. Constantinou** (Cyprus) said that persons with disabilities were indeed working as lawyers in Cyprus. Many students with disabilities were also studying a range of subjects, including law and medicine, at the University of Cyprus.

9. Referring to paragraph 52 of the replies to the list of issues, he said that the term "empirically and scientifically supported training" simply meant that the training methods used were backed by the latest research or scientific studies. For example, training for police officers on arresting persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities included information not only on the relevant rights and procedures but also on how to recognize those disabilities, dispelling many of the associated myths and misconceptions. The 2005 Rights of Persons Arrested and Detained Act, as described in paragraph 109 of the replies to the list of issues, set out the procedure to be followed by law enforcement officers when arresting any individual and contained several provisions related to persons with disabilities. Proper procedures were thus in place to ensure that all persons, including persons with disabilities and non-Cypriots, retained their rights during the entire legal process and could complain if any of their rights were violated.

10. The Constitution guaranteed all persons the right to see justice in the courts, including for cases of discrimination. Complaints could also be filed with the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman). As for physical access to the legal infrastructure, many courts and police stations were historical buildings that could not be updated, although arrangements could be made to ensure access for persons with disabilities. Newer court buildings and police stations had, however, been constructed in line with accessibility standards.

11. The question of whether or not persons with disabilities who posed a threat to themselves or others should be committed involuntarily to a psychiatric hospital had been the subject of much debate in the scientific community. Mental-health professionals and doctors took an oath to protect human life and thus it was possible that the initial step to save a suicidal person might entail hospitalization without their consent. Strict procedures were, however, in place to regulate the use of involuntary hospitalization. While it was ultimately for the courts to decide whether or not a person should be committed against his or her will, the independent Cyprus Mental Health Commission, which was responsible for safeguarding the rights of the person being committed, had to be notified of the decision. The family of the individual concerned could also file a complaint if that procedure had not been followed.

12. **Ms. Kioupi** (Cyprus) added that action would shortly be taken to identify which provisions of the mental health legislation could be amended or abolished. Regarding article 15 of the Convention, a variety of workshops had been held for mental-health professionals in order to raise awareness of patient abuse and torture. Moreover, patients had the right to register complaints, formally or informally, regarding staff conduct. Two cases of alleged ill-treatment at the country's psychiatric hospital had been investigated, following a visit from the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in January 2016. In one case, no evidence of staff misconduct had been found; in the other, legal proceedings had been launched.

13. **Mr. Constantinou** (Cyprus) said that treatment in psychiatric hospitals was always carried out by more than one health-care professional, so that any signs of potential abuse

could be spotted. All medical and education professionals had received training on how to detect signs of abuse and were legally required to report any abuse of vulnerable persons. Several professionals had been punished for failing to do so. In the case of abuse or torture committed by police officers, an independent committee was in place to investigate such allegations and had the authority to refer cases to the courts. Numerous cases had been investigated and summary dismissal was one of the penalties that could be imposed. Regarding article 16 of the Convention, a 24-hour national helpline had been set up so that people could report domestic violence. In that connection, the Government was committed to ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which it signed in 2015.

14. Measures to ensure that persons with disabilities were not subjected to medical trials or experimental treatments without their consent included the establishment of a bioethics committee, which could refer breaches to the Attorney General. Otherwise, the only medical interventions permitted without consent were those previously described, whereby a person could be involuntarily hospitalized in specific situations.

*Articles 21-33*

15. **The Chair** said that she wished to draw the delegation's attention to the Committee's general comment No. 1, on equal recognition before the law, which advocated the new human rights-based model of disability, as opposed to the traditional approach, which tended to assume that persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities needed to be "saved", even if that meant forced medical treatment and institutionalization. It was necessary for governments to understand why such practices were harmful and move away from that outmoded approach.

16. **Mr. Ruskus** said that he wished to know what specific measures the State party had taken to move away from the current, seemingly deep-rooted culture of special education for children with disabilities towards a more inclusive, human rights-based approach. Information on the numbers of men and women with different types of disabilities who were studying at Cypriot universities would also be appreciated.

17. Turning to the issue of health, he asked how the State party ensured that the highest quality health-care services were available and accessible to persons with chronic diseases, such as epilepsy, Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis and other so-called invisible disabilities.

18. **Mr. Rukhledev** said that he wished to know whether the State party had standards in place to ensure that voting booths and election materials were accessible and, if so, whether those standards were being fully implemented; whether organizations of persons with disabilities participated in designing programmes aimed at persons with disabilities; and whether any persons with disabilities were serving as members of parliament.

19. Regarding sport and culture, he asked what specific support was provided by the State party to promote the development of sports involving athletes with disabilities, ensure that sports facilities were accessible and foster the participation of children with disabilities in sporting activities. He would also welcome information on what the Government was doing to ensure that cultural sites, such as museums, were fully accessible and to enable persons with disabilities to realize their creative potential.

20. **Mr. Alsaif** said that he would welcome information on whether any monitoring mechanisms to follow up on implementation of the Convention had been established at government level. He also wished to know whether organizations of persons with disabilities had been involved in the drafting of the State party's initial report and, if so, to what extent.

21. **Mr. Basharu** said that he would like to know what measures were in place to ensure that sign language interpretation was used to disseminate media information to deaf persons and whether sign language was recognized as an official language in Cyprus. He also wondered whether Braille was actively taught to blind persons and used to good effect in the State party.

22. He would be grateful for data disaggregated by age, sex and type of disability on the proportion of children with disabilities in mainstream and special education schools.

Information should also be provided on what efforts were being made to increase the number of children with disabilities who were attending inclusive education schools.

23. He asked what specific measures had been taken since the submission of the State party's report to address the fact that access to polling centres and election materials was somewhat limited for persons with disabilities and to amend the electoral law so that persons with psychosocial disabilities could fully participate in the electoral process.

24. **Mr. You** Liang said that he wished to know whether or not it was possible for persons with disabilities to receive personal assistance to support them in carrying out their parental duties, whatever kind of disability they had.

25. Turning to article 29 of the Convention, he asked what legal measures had been taken to eliminate the practice of declaring persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities as being of "unsound mind" or "incompetent", an exercise that rendered them unable to vote or stand for election; how many such persons had been declared as such and thus excluded from political life; and what measures had been taken to safeguard the rights, including voting rights, of such persons living in institutions.

26. **Mr. Martin** asked what steps had been taken or were envisaged to produce public information in easy-to-read formats for persons with intellectual disabilities; what types of information were or would be available in those formats; and what measures were in place to ensure that information reached the people who needed it.

27. **Mr. Kim** Hyung Shik, noting that the State party was involved in the Multi-Donor Trust Fund of the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, said that he wished to know how, and to what extent, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations were involved in designing, implementing and monitoring activities associated with the Fund. Similarly, he wondered how the State party intended to involve persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those that were relevant to persons with disabilities.

28. **Mr. Kabue** said that he would welcome information on the measures taken to develop and promote augmentative and alternative communication to enable persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities to express themselves freely. He was concerned to hear that the State party was considering withdrawing financial support from persons with disabilities and providing service-based assistance only. Without financial support, persons with disabilities would no longer have the ability to exercise control over their own lives. In that connection, he wondered what income unemployed persons with disabilities currently received and whether it enabled them to enjoy an adequate standard of living. Information should also be provided on whether, and, if so, how, the State party had improved its monitoring mechanism by, for example, ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities or increasing its funding.

29. **Mr. Ishikawa** said that he wished to know what measures were in place to allow students with disabilities to choose an inclusive school within their local community and to receive any necessary reasonable accommodations, such as textbooks in accessible formats, assistive devices and technologies, and to be taught by appropriately trained teachers. He would be grateful for information on the steps taken to ensure that persons with disabilities had full, barrier-free access to cultural and leisure activities and venues, such as museums, restaurants and swimming pools.

30. **Mr. Chaker** said that he would like to know what action had been taken to help persons with disabilities find employment; how many persons with disabilities were employed by the Government or worked in the private sector; and what the poverty rate was among persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities, in the State party.

31. **Mr. Tatić** said that attempted suicide could not be invoked as a pretext for non-compliance with article 14 of the Convention.

32. He wondered whether tourists from countries that were not members of the European Union could benefit under the State party's new project to provide access to cultural and archaeological sites.

33. He asked how many deaf students attended universities in the State party and how many sign language interpreters were available to assist them. He also wished to know whether measures had been taken to make universities in old buildings accessible to wheelchair users.

34. He asked whether the accuracy of information and advertisements displayed on websites for tourists, for instance concerning the accessibility of hotels, was monitored and, if so, whether organizations of persons with disabilities were involved in the monitoring process.

35. **Mr. Pyaneandee** asked whether the State party had undertaken research on the socioeconomic and cultural benefits of inclusive education. Additional information on action to foster such education, for instance through adjustments to curricula and teacher training, would also be useful. He wondered whether there was a mechanism for monitoring accessibility standards with regard to reasonable accommodation and what budgetary allocations had been made for the project.

36. **Mr. Buntan** said that he wished to know whether there were any judges or prosecutors with disabilities in the State party and, if so, whether measures had been taken to provide reasonable accommodation so that they could function properly and ensure access to justice.

37. He wished to know how many or what proportion of official websites complied with international accessibility standards and guidelines.

38. He welcomed the measures to promote accessible curricula and assistive devices for persons with disabilities attending both mainstream and special schools. He would be interested to hear about plans to reform special schools and special classrooms in mainstream schools so that they supported an inclusive education system.

39. He wished to know whether the State party planned to ratify and implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled (the Marrakesh Treaty).

40. He would be interested to learn the extent to which persons with disabilities and their organizations were involved in promoting the inclusion of all aspects of disability in action to implement and monitor the Sustainable Development Goals.

41. **Mr. Lovászy** asked how the Guaranteed Minimum Income scheme affected the employment of persons with disabilities in the open labour market.

42. He wondered what the State party's reaction was to the recent conclusion by the Court of Justice of the European Union that the Union was competent to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty.

43. **Mr. Langvad** said that he would be grateful for information on measures to promote reasonable accommodation in the context of inclusive education outside the classroom, for instance during leisure time.

44. He wondered whether persons with disabilities had access to information regarding sexual and reproductive health and whether there were initiatives to combat discrimination and stereotyping of women and girls with disabilities in the health sector.

45. He would welcome information regarding the number of persons with disabilities who were deemed to be capable of working on a full or part-time basis, the number of persons in that category who were actually employed, and the number of persons deemed to be incapable of working on either a full or a part-time basis. He would also be interested to learn the impact of cuts in public expenditure due to the financial crisis on persons with disabilities employed in the public sector.

46. He would be grateful for information regarding policies, legislation and programmes aimed at guaranteeing equal access for refugees and asylum seekers to financial and social

support, and measures to promote dialogue between refugees and asylum seekers and Cypriot organizations of persons with disabilities.

47. He would be grateful for specific examples of how the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of the World Health Organization was to be incorporated in the national database on disability.

48. He wondered whether the State party planned to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and to endorse the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and, if so, when.

49. There seemed to be a low level of involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities in international cooperation, including in the conference to launch the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023 to be held shortly in Cyprus.

50. He wished to know about procedures adopted by the State party to make its initial report on the Convention available to persons with disabilities in accessible formats such as Braille, sign language, easy-to-read text or electronically.

51. He asked whether different groups of persons with disabilities with comparable needs were entitled to different levels of social support, such as persons with spinal cord injuries and persons with cerebral palsy.

52. **The Chair** asked whether the State party intended to allocate additional budgetary funds for the country's independent monitoring mechanism with a view to ensuring full compliance with the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

*The meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.*

53. **Ms. Constantinidou** (Cyprus) said that the Ministry of Education and Culture supported inclusive and free education for all children, including immigrants and refugees, and endorsed action to accommodate their needs, regardless of disability, gender and ethnic origin. In line with that policy, the majority of children with disabilities were enrolled in mainstream classes.

54. The educational needs of all children had been taken into consideration under the restructured curriculum. A committee had advised experts on the restructuring measures required to meet the needs of children with disabilities, such as new instructional methods, differentiation of tasks, cooperative learning, development of materials and teacher flexibility. Training courses were organized for mainstream and special education teachers with a view to familiarizing them with the new goals and enhancing their knowledge and skills. Compulsory in-service training courses and school-based seminars were held each year for primary and secondary schoolteachers. Both mainstream and special education teachers were trained to use new technology. Since September 2015, all teachers had been provided with opportunities for continuous in-service professional training, including training for cooperation with national and foreign universities.

55. The education of children with disabilities was regulated by separate legislation. Teachers were trained to cater for deaf and blind persons and therapists were employed in special schools to accommodate the pupils' needs. The curriculum was rendered accessible by means of assistive technology, such as specialized software, touchscreens, communication devices and interactive whiteboards. Braille and sign language were also used.

56. During the 2016/17 academic year, 275 boys and 129 girls — just 0.37 per cent of the total school population — were enrolled in the nine special schools. One school was for blind children, one for deaf children and seven for children with severe or multiple disabilities. When children attended such schools, careful attention was paid to their opinions and those of their parents. The parents were free to express their wishes regarding placement. They could participate in the assessment process and bring along experts to offer advice. The children were invariably asked for their opinions, primarily by educational psychologists. They were usually assessed by multidisciplinary teams established by district committees. If parents disagreed with a district committee's decision

on placement or any other matter, they could appeal to the committee and, if necessary, to a central committee. Only a few appeals had been filed in 2016 against district committees' decisions and the parents' opinions had been taken into account in most cases.

57. The law required special schools to be built within the bounds of mainstream schools to enhance integration. If that was not possible, they were encouraged to develop contact networks with mainstream schools in order to minimize segregation. Children attending special classes followed the regular curriculum in some subjects, but withdrew to their own classes for specialized instruction. They participated in all extracurricular activities. Accessibility was guaranteed in all new buildings, and older buildings were rendered accessible through extensions and refurbishment.

58. Special equipment, such as wheelchairs, working aids and assistive technology, was provided in schools. Parents could also take such equipment home or apply for equipment from the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

59. The economic crisis of recent years had not affected budgetary allocations for special education. In 2016, allocations amounting to over €11 million had been provided for equipment, care assistance, transport and other requirements. An additional €586,000 had been allocated for such services in 2017.

60. Following the adoption of the Recognition of Cyprus Sign Language Act in 2006, a scientific committee had developed core vocabulary and grammar for use in schools and elsewhere. Sign language interpreters provided services for both schoolchildren and adults, and the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities subsidized the use of such services by the Cyprus Federation for the Deaf.

61. All public and private universities were required to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Student welfare officers provided instructions to lecturers and academics regarding accommodation during examinations and diverse projects. All new universities complied with Regulation 61 H of the Streets and Buildings Act.

62. Thirteen students with hearing disabilities were enrolled in the University of Cyprus and three in the Cyprus University of Technology. Sign language interpreters were provided on request.

63. The Ministry of Education and Culture regarded the Convention as a significant milestone for the advancement of education. The Minister had established a committee to develop recommendations for reform. The committee had put forward several recommendations and was currently drafting a policy paper on reform. The views of organizations of persons with disabilities, parents and other stakeholders would be taken into account in order to support progress towards inclusive education.

64. **Ms. Flourentzou-Kakouri** (Cyprus) said that the Radio and Television Organizations Act required all media to broadcast a special news bulletin that was comprehensible for deaf persons. The Radio and Television Authority encouraged media service providers to gradually increase to at least 5 per cent the proportion of programmes that were accessible to people with visual or hearing impairments.

65. According to the Department of Information Technology Services, 55 per cent of public service websites were currently accessible to persons with disabilities and measures were being taken to ensure full accessibility. The Department was planning to organize a training programme for civil servants under the second National Disability Action Plan in how to render website material accessible.

66. As for the Marrakesh Treaty, it had been proposed that a European Union directive concerning the incorporation of the Treaty into national legislation should be issued to all member States. Cyprus had expressed support for the directive.

67. The Public Employment Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance offered persons with disabilities, on request, the services of a specially trained counsellor on applications for vacant posts, interview skills and other matters. According to the Department, 780 persons with diverse disabilities were currently registered as unemployed, a figure that was equivalent to 1.9 per cent of all registered unemployed persons. Projects run by the Ministry to promote the recruitment of persons with disabilities

were funded by the European Social Fund. The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities ran additional schemes. For instance, the Supported Employment Scheme provided funds for job coaches under 23 programmes run by organizations of persons with disabilities, from which 250 persons had benefited. Subsidies were also provided for persons interested in entrepreneurship and 10 new enterprises were launched each year by persons with disabilities.

68. A total of 107 persons with disabilities had been recruited during the past five years under the public-sector quota system. Most of them were teachers at various levels of education. There were currently no data concerning the number of persons with disabilities employed in the private sector, but steps would be taken to compile such data.

69. The Law Office employed a blind law officer, and a blind prosecutor had retired three years previously. A blind person was employed by the Ministry of Labour as a prosecutor of offences relating to the Social Security Fund.

70. Persons with disabilities who had insufficient financial means to meet basic needs were entitled to a minimum income of up to €480 per month and a disability allowance of up to €368 per month. The poverty level was 16 per cent among the population in general and 21.8 per cent among persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities were entitled to a guaranteed minimum income, irrespective of the family income. Austerity measures had affected the entire population, but monthly financial and disability allowances had not been reduced. The only two schemes that had been affected were subsidies for holidays, which had been abolished, and subsidies for car purchases, which had been temporarily reduced. Refugees had the same rights to disability allowances as Cypriot citizens. The Asylum Service informed them of their entitlements in order to encourage them to apply for social benefits.

71. No member State of the European Union had ratified the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Cyprus had been one of the first States to join the United Nations World Solidarity Fund. It would also consider endorsing the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

72. Persons with disabilities and their organizations had been involved in the drafting and adoption of the Council of Europe Disability Strategy 2017-2023. The Cyprus Confederation of Organizations of the Disabled had been involved from the outset in translating the Convention and establishing the Thematic Technical Committees to draft the initial report and the first National Disability Action Plan and to monitor its implementation. She hoped that the Confederation would also participate in the drafting of the second National Action Plan and the second periodic report to the Committee. The State was required by law to fund the Confederation and to consult it on relevant issues.

73. **Ms. Kioupi** (Cyprus) said that the country's five general hospitals offered health services on an equal basis. There were also 32 health-care centres in rural and urban areas and 230 subsidiary health-care centres. The hospitals' accident and emergency departments were open to all, and persons with disabilities, refugees and others were exempt from payment of the €10 fee. All the hospitals provided physiotherapy and paediatric services. Holistic health care, including rehabilitation services, would be provided under the new national health system and payments for medical devices, orthopaedic items and artificial limbs would be reimbursed.

74. Article 25 of the Mental Health Acts 1997-2007 prohibited forced sterilization of children, especially those living in institutions. The Ministry of Health was preparing a strategy that would include the organization of reproductive health workshops to educate girls and women about sterilization.

75. **Mr. Constantinou** (Cyprus) said that everyone had the right to vote on reaching the age of 18 years. The legal capacity of about 140 persons had been questioned in court in 2016, but he did not know how many of them had attempted to vote.

76. The president of each election centre decided whether a person needed support and reasonable adjustments to exercise the right to vote. Most polling stations were actually

located in schools and most schools were accessible. However, action would be taken to ensure reasonable accommodation in all polling stations.

77. The Cyprus Tourism Organization inspected hotels and tourism sites to monitor compliance with accessibility requirements. Tourists could contact the Organization to enquire about their accessibility. A project had been launched in 2013 to make the archaeological sites of Kato Paphos, the region with the largest number of sites, as accessible as possible. New hotel and museum buildings also needed to be rendered accessible.

78. The Amateur Athletic Association of Cyprus attached great importance to the training of persons with disabilities and Cyprus had won a considerable number of medals in the Paralympic Games. The Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities funded a large number of cultural, sports and recreational programmes. Organizations were also offered financial support for hiring social assistants for cultural and recreational events. Schoolteachers encouraged children with disabilities to participate in cultural events and excursions organized by the school. The Cyprus Youth Organization, under the "Youth in Action" programme, offered recreational programmes for young people with disabilities, such as dance workshops, painting, gymnastics and sports.

79. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health was used as a scientific tool for policy change. Data were collected on the number of persons with disabilities in each region of Cyprus, disaggregated by gender, type and severity of disability, and other characteristics. Grants from the European Union and local bodies were being sought to ensure that the best possible use was made of such data.

80. **Ms. Flourentzou-Kakouri** (Cyprus) said that the Cypriot authorities were working with all stakeholders to promote more effective implementation of the Convention. Priority would be given to amendment of the legislation concerning legal capacity, adoption of the bill on the national health system, improved accessibility and promotion of deinstitutionalization.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*